

THE  
NOTIONS  
OF THE  
METHODISTS

Fully disprov'd, by setting the

DOCTRINE  
OF THE  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

CONCERNING  
*Justification and Regeneration,*  
IN A TRUE LIGHT.

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IN A LETTER to the Rev. Mr JOHN WESLEY.

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NEWCASTLE:

Printed in the Year MDCCXLII

NOTES

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NOTIONS  
OF THE  
METHODISTS Fully Disprov'd, &c.  
IN A  
LETTER  
TO THE  
Rev. Mr JOHN WESLEY.

*Reverend Sir,*

**I** Am heartily sorry there is occasion to find fault with a person of your strict life, and, in all appearance, mortified temper, from whom one might reasonably expect a suitable conduct, and the setting a bright example of modesty and humility. But so it is, that your compassing sea and land to gain proselytes; your making unwarrantable dissensions in the Church; your prejudicing the people, wherever you come, against your brethren of the Clergy, and the doctrine which they teach; your zealous and importunate preaching of opinions, doubtful at least, if not dangerous to the souls of men, as I'm verily persuaded they are, make it too evident you are not altogether that spiritual and



regenerate man, you and your colleagues would induce the world to believe, and yourself seem to imagine you feel and experience yourselves to be; and that, under this veil of piety and self-denial, there lie hid some passions not yet sufficiently mortified and yet they do not so lie hid, but that they are open and expos'd enough to the discernment of men of sense and penetration, altho' your common admirers mayn't be yet so fortunate as to discover them. You have taken much pains to gain and improve yourself in christian knowledge: you have roam'd about your native country, to discourse with people you suppose experienc'd in it; and not content with that, you have travell'd to *America* and *Germany*, to preach the Gospel, and in search of truth: and after all, 'tis uncertain whether you have yet found this precious treasure; and your notions about it, not only very materially contradict those of some of your fellows, but likewise seem yet so unfix'd and inconsistent, that it is a great question whether you ever will. However, you think the age is so degenerate, ill-principled, and ignorant of faith in Christ and justification; and the Clergy have, it seems, so much departed from the doctrine of the reformation, in these points of so great concernment, that there lies a necessity upon you, and your associates, to convert the nation a-new, lest not only some grievous temporal calamity should overwhelm it, but the souls of men also should utterly perish. And you proclaim loudly enough, that you are the only true watchmen, while the rest of the Clergy are in a lethargic state; that light is in your dwellings alone, while in other assemblies (alas for them!) there is the thickest darkness. Possess'd with this charitable opinion, you pass through all the parts of the land; you have



have preach'd in *London, Bristol, &c.* in fields and commons, drawing great numbers after you, many out of curiosity and novelty, many as having itching ears, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. At last you arrive at *Newcastle*, upon the aforesaid candid supposition, that the Clergy there are men of unorthodox principles, and pervert the flock; and so, in kind compassion to the souls of the people, you are come to give them more wholesome instructions, and awaken them out of that deep sleep into which their ministers had unhappily cast them. But give me leave to inform you, if you don't know it already by your own experience, that they are (without offence be it spoken) much more orthodox than yourself; are as diligent in the exercise of their office, as any in the kingdom; and are persons of such learning and abilities, that they have no occasion at all for your assistance. But they need not mine or any other's commendation; and, methinks, you should consider their candour, and the modesty of their behaviour towards you, as a sharp, though silent, reproof of your boldness. But to come close to the matter: you are, or pretend to be, a Clergyman of our Church, and, I suppose, you would bethought to maintain her doctrine, to which you have subscrib'd. I therefore, partly to undeceive those you have misled, and partly, if possible, to set you right, as I heartily wish I may, have drawn up in few words what I firmly believe the Church's true doctrine of Justification and Regeneration; and beg, for you own sake, and that of your hearers, you will conscientiously compare your opinions with what I have deliver'd, as those of the Church: and if, on the comparison, you find yourself or me mistaken, either be so kind to yourself as to correct your own, or so chari-

charitable to me, as to convict me of my errors. But before I go any further, to prevent mistakes, and that no one may be charg'd with my blunders, I think proper here to assure you, and every body, that no Clergyman whatever, either at *Newcastle*, or any other part of the diocese, is privy to, or knows any thing of, what I have written.

## Of JUSTIFICATION.

**J**ustification means pardon of our sins, God's accounting us as righteous, receiving us into favour and friendship with himself, and giving us thereupon a right to everlasting happiness. The free grace and mercy of God is the principal cause of our Justification. The sacrifice which Christ once offer'd upon the cross for the sins of the whole world is the sole meritorious cause of it.

God freely made a covenant with fall'n man (which covenant was ratify'd and confirm'd by the shedding of Christ's blood) that he would justify him in the sense above specify'd, upon his performing the condition prescrib'd in the gospel: which condition is faith, which includes obedience.

Where we are said to be justified by faith, and not by works; we are to understand either works commanded by the law of *Moses*, or works of sinless obedience, which it is impossible for fall'n man to perform; or works done upon a notion, that we thereby properly deserve the favour of God and eternal salvation, as being the meritorious cause thereof; and not evangelical works, which are perform'd in, and join'd with faith in Christ.

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Justifying faith is operative, practical, and obediential faith: such was *Abraham's* faith, and therefore that of all christians must be of the same nature.

When our church says, we are justify'd by faith alone, she intends only to exclude all merit from our good works, and to declare we ought solely to depend upon the merits of Christ, and embrace the gratuitous or free mercy of God promis'd to us through him; and she does not exclude our virtues, graces, and good works, which, not as meritorious, but as conditions of the Gospel commanded by Christ, we are bound to exercise and do: for she in many places of her authentic books affirms, that we receive remission of sins, and consequently are justified, upon condition of repentance as well as of faith.

We are truly said to be justified freely by God, since all our graces and virtues are infused into us by his Holy Spirit; and all our outward good works are the fruits of these spiritual graces; and we are reconcil'd to God, not by any deserts of our own, but by God's mercy, and through the sole merits of Christ. For when we have done all we can, God is no way tied to give us any thing, but only on account of his most gracious promise.

They who teach, that we are justified by the single virtue of faith alone, do by consequence affirm, that repentance is not necessary for the obtaining pardon of sin, since pardon of sin is a considerable part of Justification. God, in this life, undoubtedly pardons sincere and faithful penitents; but no man can, without a particular revelation, have



an absolute assurance, that he in particular is pardon'd, though in reality he be sincere; because he cannot be absolutely sure of his sincerity, and of his perseverance in a regenerate state. Every man ought to have an assurance, that if he unfeignedly believes and repents, God does justify him. He that believes the Gospel, is infallibly sure God performs his promise of justifying penitents upon their performance of the condition: but God has nowhere promis'd ordinarily to assure particular men they are truly penitent, having reserv'd that to be declared at the last judgment. There have been, God knows, too many, who have had a very high confidence of their being in a state of salvation, who were yet very far from being so; and did but flatter themselves into a dangerous security, while at the same time they remain'd still in their sins. Such a pharisaical assurance, and undoubted persuasion, would be a great presumption even in the best men, since all are to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. And therefore it is best and safest for christians to think soberly and modestly of themselves, as to their spiritual concerns and Justification: and it is generally more commendable to lean to the side of humble fear, than of arrogant self-flattery; to be too lowly rather than too presumptuous, which yet is not at all inconsistent with a well-settled and comfortable hope. For the more we truly fear God, the readier we shall be to keep his commandments, and the firmer ground we have to hope we are, and shall be, in his favour.

Justification is not an instantaneous act, fully compleated at one and the same moment; but it is a continued act, then at length perfect and consummate,

summate, when a person has to the very end of his life fulfill'd the condition of the covenant by which he is justified.

We are not justified, by having Christ's righteousness imputed to us, so as that it truly becomes ours; since it cannot be said, that when Christ perform'd it, we perform'd it in him. For if that were the case, this absurdity would follow, that we have no need to do any thing ourselves, and there would be no occasion for repentance and pardon, Christ's righteousness, by the imputation of which we are supposed to be accounted just, being so compleat in itself, that nothing else would be at all requisite. But our own faith, made perfect by love, is imputed to us for righteousness, through the merits of Christ's righteousness and satisfaction. Hence it is evident, that Christ's righteousness is the cause which merited universally for all men a right to be justified, or accounted righteous, on performing a certain condition; and any one's performing that condition, *viz.* believing and obeying the Gospel, applies to him in particular, upon the terms of the Gospel-Covenant, that right to be justified which Christ merited for all.

### Of R E G E N E R A T I O N.

**R**egeneration or Sanctification goes before Justification in the order of nature, tho' perhaps there may not be always a priority in respect of time. For we are accounted righteous by God, when we are become new creatures, or changed from a state of sin to a state of purity and holiness. And if we make a continual progress in goodness and the spiritual life, we shall be still the more justified in the

the sight of God, till we arrive at length at our final Justification, or at the highest pitch of acceptance with God in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Regeneration is an inward change and alteration of the mind, the purifying of our corrupt nature, and the renewal of the image of God in us; and this is wrought by a divine power influencing our faculties, whereby we are made members of Christ, and the children of God by adoption. This first commences at our Baptism, we being then born again both of water and of the spirit, as both the holy scriptures, and their best interpreters, the primitive Church and our own, clearly teach. And if we resist not the grace of God continually cleansing and sanctifying us both in body and soul, but will husband our talent with care and industry; if we pray for daily increase of it, attend diligently to the means of grace, and cheerfully obey the motions of God's holy spirit, he will mercifully bestow upon us more grace, and we shall go on to improve in it, and persevere in a regenerate state, to the end of our lives. Our obedience and good actions must evidence the change of our minds and tempers; and no man must dare to think himself in this regenerate state, if he is disobedient, and his works are sinful,

The holy ghost is the principal author, or the efficient cause; the bishops and other ministers of God are the ministerial; God's word and the blessed sacraments are the instrumental causes of regeneration; and we ourselves co-operate with all these in this great work. But the glory of it is only due to God; without grace all subordinate means would be ineffectual.

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I have said, that regeneration is the renewal of the image of God in us. By which I mean, that we receive again something we once had, but lost. *Adam* at his first creation, and while he continued in the state of integrity, had in him something more than barely natural faculties in great perfection: he was also endow'd with the divine principle of the spirit, or with supernatural grace and strength in order to supernatural and eternal happiness. In this divine principal the image of God in him chiefly consisted, which by his fall he forfeited both for himself and us. And this image is again renew'd in us when we are born again, when *we put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which is created in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.* See *Bishop Bull's Discourse upon the state of man before the fall*, Vol. 3.

Infants are regenerated by their baptism, or then enter into a regenerate state, as I have explain'd above. And having thus receiv'd a divine principle, and ghostly strength, to perform the condition of the Gospel-Covenant, so long as in their thoughts, intents and actions, they make a right use of it, they continue in a regenerate state. Adult persons, suppose Heathens not yet baptiz'd, although by the prevalency of the divine aid giving efficacy to the word preach'd, and to the arguments used for their conviction, they are persuaded of the necessity of faith and repentance, and are willing and desirous to embrace the christian religion, yet, till they are baptiz'd, they don't receive that fullness of grace by which they are regenerated. They are candidates for it, but are not, strictly speaking, possess'd of it. Indeed, if they should chance to die before baptism,

baptism, there is great reason to hope God will in mercy accept the will for the deed; and give a suitable reward to that imperfect grace which he has been pleased to bestow upon them.

In order to our further Regeneration, God puts no violence upon our faculties, but affords such a power and ability to them, as will be sufficient to enable us, if we honestly do our parts, to bring this work to greater perfection. The grace is not so forcible as cannot be oppos'd, but competent for the purpose, and will be abundantly effectual, if through our own perverseness we don't thwart and reject it. When we are really in a regenerate state, the grace is so far from being irresistible, that it may actually fail. For as our Church clearly teaches in her XVth Article, we may willingly commit deadly or mortal sin after baptism; and they are to be condemn'd which say, they can no more sin as long as they live. The article indeed affirms, that by the grace of God we may arise and amend our lives. But this is manifestly a contingent, not a necessary thing. What may be, may not be; and, consequently, men may both totally and finally fall from grace.

It is also clear, we are not merely passive in the whole work of Regeneration. I grant, infants at their baptism are merely passive, when this work first begins, what is then done being only the operation of God. But when they come to the use of reason, and are able to employ their faculties, they are bound to exert their own endeavours, and to co-operate with God, in order to preserve and improve the grace given, and do their utmost to cultivate this spiritual seed, that it may grow up into a plen-

a plentiful harvest. As they grow in years, they must use diligence to increase in virtue and holiness, that the image of God, which is renew'd in them, may not be defac'd, but be render'd still more bright and illustrious. In short, as our excellent Catechism teaches, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform the conditions of the Gospel-Covenant; and they are to endeavour all they can, by the frequent use of the means of grace, and all other fit ways, to be daily more and more the children of God. As to the adult, it is evident, as I hinted before, they are to concur with God's grace both before, at, and after their baptism; and whoever does not, at least after his baptism, cannot be truly said to be born of God, or of the divine Spirit.

It is likewise manifest, that the act or work of Regeneration is not momentaneous, but progressive. For tho' the grace given by God, when we are first regenerated, is infus'd at some particular time, yet men are gradually prepar'd and dispos'd for it by the divine assistance, invigorating their endeavours; and they must, if adult persons, be willing to accept, and heartily pray for, obtaining the grace at the time of receiving it, and must labour to keep, and by degrees advance it afterwards. And by this means they will become more regenerate: for *unto every one that hath, that is, has well employ'd the talent of grace entrusted with him, shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.* So then the act or work of Regeneration has its beginning, as well as all other acts have, at some instant of time; but it is carrying on, and perfecting, all our lives, God continually working in us, and our own acts and endeavours being excited, and made effectual, by  
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grace preventing, assisting, and following them. For as long as a man is a child of God, so long the work of Regeneration lasts, and that is as long as the faithful have the world, the flesh, and the devil, to wrestle with, as long as we are in this state of trial; after which is over, the Regeneration is come to a degree of perfection, and will be finally consummated at the resurrection of the just. For, as I conceive, *St Matthew* (xxi. 28.) by the *Regeneration* is to be understood of that.

When we are, by Regeneration, enter'd upon the state of purity and holiness, then it is that the Holy Spirit is more strictly, and intimately, and fully united to us, and, as it were, fixes his abode in our souls, never to depart thence, unless driven out by the committing of some very grievous sin; and then willing to return, if we amend our lives, by a serious and timely repentance. Together with the Holy Ghost, Christ, and God the Father, take possession of our hearts; for tho' the three persons of the ever blessed Trinity are distinct, yet they are never separated. *St John* saith, *The spirit of truth dwelleth with you, and shall be in you: and, If a man love me, he will keep my Words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* Now let us consider the manner of the Holy Ghost's dwelling in us. 'Tis certain it is not by an hypostatical or personal union, nor merely by the presence of his essence and power, for so he is with all his creatures; but by the presence also of his salutary gifts and graces, whereby he purifies our souls, pardons our sins, and gives us strength to perform our whole christian duty. Thus it is, and no otherwise, that we are the temples of the Holy Ghost; and by these spi-  
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ritual graces we are made one with Christ, and Christ with us. And whoever means any thing more by Christ's *being form'd in them*, and such like expressions, are, I'm afraid, under a very great mistake.

In this manner, and no other, the Holy Ghost ordinarily dwells in all the faithful, who sincerely believe the Gospel, who heartily love and fear God, and keep his commandments. And there is no promise in the holy scriptures whereon to ground any extraordinary or infallible suggestions, inspirations or illuminations. And though it be true, that God infuses into, or by his spirit inspires us with his gifts and graces, and is continually moving us both to think and do always such things as be right-ful, yet there is not within ourselves any infallible certainty or knowledge, that we have receiv'd them. If we are always thankful, that God never ceases to bestow his sanctifying graces upon us, and take care effectually to employ them, we may be sufficiently, tho' not infallibly, assur'd we have them, because our minds, by their gracious effects, may be sensible they are govern'd and directed by them, and may perceive the happy and saving influence they have upon our lives. I say, we are not infallibly assur'd, because, as some may be truly possess'd of these graces, who, through a melancholy temper, are little or not at all sensible of them; so many warm men may have a strong conceit they have them, and yet be very carnal all the while, abounding, for instance, in pride, faction, singularity, ambition, vain-glory, and holding many erroneous and damnable doctrines, contrary to the faith and purity of the Gospel. I might instance in Mr *Whitefield*, whose doctrine seems to me to be  
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altogether *Antinomian*, at least by clear and direct consequence. However, we see the *Quakers*, and many other the like Enthusiasts, pretend to this infallible feeling of the spirit within them; but they can assign no ground in God's word for this delusion, and their errors evidently demonstrate the light they assume to themselves is mere darkness. And it is somewhat remarkable, that when men of heated imaginations do, in their patherical discourses, strongly inculcate upon their hearers this gross notion of feeling the spirit, it has a very surprising effect upon people of troubled minds, and gloomy dispositions, who finding nothing of this sensibility in themselves, are hence persuaded they are in an unregenerate and lost estate, and fall into frightful tremblings and convulsions, which their teachers fondly call the *forming of Christ in them*, and the *pangs of the new birth*, whereas they are really nothing else but the fumes of melancholy.

But if these gentlemen would please to think and talk reasonably of the sense and perception men have of the inward graces of God's spirit; if they would consider, that God deals with us as with rational creatures, they would, I conceive, chuse to explain this doctrine in some such manner as this: That we, by both outward means, (to wit, hearing and reading God's word and the like) and by divine assistance accompanying the means, being come to a sincere resolution of believing and obeying the Gospel, and having thereupon an earnest desire, and heartily praying to receive the graces of the spirit, God, in his infinite goodness, vouchsafes to plant them in our souls; and if we honestly study to cultivate and improve them, then  
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by the blessed effects of them upon our lives, we have great, though not indubitable, reason to be persuaded, that we have these graces, and, consequently, that so we are united to the spirit, and to Christ. Thus we may have a high, though not the highest degree of certainty, that the Holy Ghost, though not substantially, yet effectually dwelleth in us; and that, by receiving the divine grace, we are partakers of the divine nature. We come to this knowledge by argumentation, not by revelation; not in an infallible, but in a rational way. And this seems the just way of arguing: I find, upon a strict examination of my heart, that I have full purpose to do God's will in all respects, with regard to God, my neighbour, and myself; and that I sincerely endeavour to perform it to the utmost, not trusting at all in the merit of my own righteousness, but only in Christ's merits: and therefore I have sufficient ground to be persuaded, that God has bounteously confer'd his graces upon me; for that without them I should not be able either to will or to do any thing to purpose, which concerns my salvation. But now, since the hearts of men are very deceitful, and we are too apt to over-rate our own goodness, this confidence ought to have a great mixture of fear, if we would think of ourselves with sobriety; and therefore he takes the safest side, who, when he has done all that is commanded him, casts himself upon God's mercy through Christ, and rather chuses with the Publican to say, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner*, than to justify himself after the manner of the proud Pharisee, and arrogantly to boast he has arriv'd at sinless perfection. And this fear of offending so good a God, will be a spur to our duty; and by that means we shall attain to a well-grounded hope

and comfortable expectation of God's pardon here, and glory hereafter. And thus it is apparent we can ordinarily have only a rational, not an absolute assurance, that we are the children of God. 'Tis plain, our knowledge in this affair cannot go beyond its grounds. All that can be said is, that if we unfeignedly walk in the love and fear of God; if we have really a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards man; if we have this testimony within ourselves, (which we can't have infallibly without a particular revelation) that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, we have our conversation in the world, then we shall know sufficiently, that the Holy Spirit has given us his grace, and the spirit beareth witness with our spirit, and our spirit with him, that we are in a regenerate state. No more than this can, without manifest violence, be concluded from scripture, and from the doctrine of our Church, about the indwelling of God's spirit, and our perception of it.

I therefore would intreat those, who claim this high privilege of absolute assurance to themselves, in the words of the apostle, *Not to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think, but to think soberly; neither to be too wise in their own conceits; and to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, with all lowliness and meanness, with long suffering, forbearing one another, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.* And I beseech them to remember, that they who want charity, which all do, who without just cause disturb the peace of the Church, let them be never such eloquent and powerful preachers, tho' they speak with the tongues even of angels, they are as *sounding brass and tinkling cymbals*; nay, tho' they

*they have all faith, which you so strenuously and justly contend for, yet if they have not charity, which forms and consummates it, and which vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, it profiteth them nothing.*

Having given you, sir, a short sketch of the true doctrine of our Church, both you and the reader will easily discern the wide difference between yours and it. Let me now beseech you seriously to lay to heart the solemn promise you made at your ordination, which you seem entirely to have forgot. You then declar'd, in the presence of God, that you would give your faithful diligence always to minister the doctrine of the Church, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and realm has receiv'd the same. Now since your preaching upon these points is plainly contrary to the doctrine of this Church, I charge it upon you in this publick manner, that you have broke this promise, and leave you to make the best defence you can.

You then also declared, the Lord being your helper, that you would reverently obey your ordinary, and other chief ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and government over you, following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions, and submitting yourself to their godly judgments. Now the bishops and chief ministers of this Church, the bishop of *London* especially in his excellent *Pastoral Letter*, have publickly declared themselves against your doctrines and practices, and yet you stily disobey their directions, and with unparallel'd obstinacy withstand and reject all their admonitions; you avowedly transgress the Laws



Both of the Church and State, and violate the canons which were made, and are now executed by those who have the chief authority; and thus you are manifestly guilty both of schism and rebellion, which are two very grievous and damnable sins.

You likewise then vow'd, you would maintain and set forward, as much as lieth in you, quietness, peace and love among all christian people; but notwithstanding this, you are the sower and ringleader of dissention, endeavouring with unwearied assiduity to set the flock at variance with their ministers and each other, and spreading abroad thro' the nation this vile calumny against your brethren, that they have apostatiz'd from the principles of the reformation, and are teachers of erroneous and strange doctrines. Now this I must tell you is untrue, and I am sure you cannot lay this to the charge of the Clergy of *Newcastle*, therefore you have not the least pretence to raise disturbances there. And please to lay your hand upon your heart and consider, whether the abusive character you give of the Clergy don't suit yourself best. They preach nothing but what is agreeable to the doctrine contain'd in the Church's authentick books upon these points, but your unhappy conduct is quite otherwise.

You know very well you have no authority to exercise your ministry in any congregation without a licence from the bishop. Have you any licence from the learned bishop of the diocese where you now reside? The world knows he is a person of more wisdom than to authorize any such irregular practices; but the disorderly spirit which governs you, disdains to proceed in the peaceable way; it  
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is not the author of peace, but of confusion, and therefore no wonder it acts against the due subordination of presbyters to their ecclesiastical superiors; and yet you pretend to be the only spiritual and gifted men, never once reflecting upon what St Paul says, *That the works of the flesh are manifest, some of which are these, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, and that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God, and that these are opposite to the fruits of the spirit, which are love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness: and never recollecting the precepts of obeying those, who have the rule over you in the Lord, and admonishing you; and the apostle's exhortation, that if you, as you pretend, live in the spirit, you should also walk in the spirit, and not be desirous of vain-glory; provoking one another, envying one another. Can you, who would be esteem'd so mighty in the Scriptures, be so ignorant, that the same apostle reproving the Corinthians for their schisms and factions, evidently condemns your present practice? Please to apply these words to yourselves, as you justly may: *Ye are yet carnal; for whereas there are among you envyings, and strife and divisions; are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* You assume to yourself great wisdom and high attainments in all spiritual knowledge; but it requires no depth of understanding to judge, whether your character and conduct suits that of the spiritually or carnally wise man in St James, *Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom: but if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the truth: this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish;**

*Wilish; for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work; but the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality or wrangling, and without hypocrisy; and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.* Here is a glass, in which, if you look carefully, you will clearly see to the very bottom of your heart. Examine it therefore with all diligence, and if you discern something you don't like, amend it presently. But now, if you are really sensual and carnal, as you have too great reason to fear; have not you the strongest evidence that, notwithstanding your boasting, you really want the spirit of God, that without great care and watchfulness, you may easily mistake something else for it, and that it is in vain to talk that men may be absolutely and infallibly sure they have the divine consciousness, that witness of God, which is more and greater than ten thousand human witnesses, as your warm brother vehemently asserts?

You say, and I wish it were true, that you love God with all your heart; if you do, then certainly you must love Christ: but how can that be, when you make such scandalous divisions in his mystical body? Can a man love Christ, who don't love his members? And do not they hate his members, who revile and slander them, and set them one against another? Before he that breaks the peace of Christ's Church, is at enmity with Christ; and he that tears out the bowels of the Church, his mother, can't have God for his father. And you may talk of the new birth as long as you please, but if you are a rebellious son of this mother, your having  
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been born again in her, will only tend to your condemnation.

And now, fir, what is this, which your zeal, *but not according to knowledge*, prompts you to make this huge bustle about. If the Church and Clergy did indeed teach false and damnable doctrine, then you might justly say, *woe is me! if I preach not the gospel!* But you cannot prove any such thing, nay, indeed you manifestly confute yourself: for you constantly communicate with this Church and Clergy, whom you scruple not to accuse of almost universally teaching of devilish doctrine, of being deceitful workers, of denying the whole scriptures, the whole truth and promise, and testimony of God. If this heavy charge were true, *Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord*, would be your rule and duty. But, thanks be to God, you have not made good your accusation. You are displeas'd, because they will not embrace your tenets. A great crime indeed! they will not puzzle the heads of the people with points so hard to be understood, but preach to them the plain and saving truths of the gospel, which is food much more fit for their weak stomachs. You cannot be ignorant what bitter contentions and fatal divisions these controversies about Justification by faith alone, and the like, when not rightly stated and handled with great discretion and caution, have occasion'd in the Church; and the quarrel among yourselves about them may teach you, they are not the most fit to be so much pressed upon vulgar capacities. However, since you have made it in some measure necessary, by your erroneous account of these doctrines, to set them in a right light for their better instruction, and thereby

thereby to convince them they have no cause to leave their proper guides, to follow you, who, both without necessity, and to their apparent danger thrust yourselves upon them, I have taken this small pains to undeceive them; and hope they will now be able to see through your sheep's clothing, and for the future study to be quiet and mind their own business; which will be a far wiser course than rambling after you, whithersoever you shall lead them. And I trust it will be no small prejudice against you, when it is duly consider'd by them, that you are not sent by any authority in the Church upon this errand, and cannot pretend any ordinary commission for it. And unless you can shew some extraordinary authority, supported by miracles for your doings, however you may now boast of your conversions, you will in the end render yourselves the ridicule of mankind. Please therefore, for your own sakes, to leave off these vain practices, endeavour to amend your gross enormities, and study all you can to convert those you have deluded, back again to truth and peace, and to their wits, so will you in some degree repair the ill you have done, and the unhappy breaches you have made; and 'tis to be hop'd God will then mercifully forgive you, and make you again a useful member in the Church, which is the hearty prayer of,

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*Reverend Sir,*

*Your humble Servant*



